



Georgia Commission on Family Violence
Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Joint Statement on Addressing Domestic Violence during COVID-19 Pandemic

While we are all working to respond to the coronavirus pandemic in the state of Georgia, we recognize that domestic violence takes no break even at times like these. While measures to shelter in place help to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we recognize families will be even more stressed with lost work, closed schools and the realities of this illness, posing a unique threat to people in abusive relationships.

Sheltering in place does not mean that a victim of domestic violence is required to stay in isolation with an abusive partner. People impacted by domestic violence can still get the support of an advocate for help accessing crucial resources. Local domestic violence shelters and organizations are working diligently with anyone who calls to find them safe housing - both safe from exposure to COVID-19 and safe from abuse.

During this time, the 24-hour state-wide domestic violence hotline is still available as a resource for those seeking help to escape violence in their home. The number to call is 1-800-33-HAVEN. You can find your local domestic violence program and more information at the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence's website www.gcadv.org. Additionally, you may call 911 for immediate assistance. Police intervention can be life-saving but we know there are very real barriers for some survivors contacting the police. Survivors should not have to take any actions that they feel would jeopardize their safety.

Domestic violence offenses should not be excused because we are facing a health crisis. Citizens can still seek temporary protective orders during this time. Contact your local courthouse clerk's office or domestic violence organization for information on how to obtain a TPO.

Courts handling domestic violence cases and protection orders should continue to refer offenders to Family Violence Intervention Programs as mandated by law. Programs are still available and offering classes virtually. The Georgia Commission on Family Violence can assist with providing information for locating virtual classes being offered in your jurisdiction. Please contact the Georgia Commission on Family Violence at 404-657-3412 or visit the website at www.gcfv.ga.gov for assistance with these programs.